Crop Conditions as of May 19, 2011

Weather conditions in the province during the last two weeks have been mainly warm, dry and windy, despite some precipitation reported in many areas. Overall, seeding has been progressing rapidly, and is estimated at 57 per cent complete, compared to less than one per cent on May 3, 2011. In most years, seeding is about 65-70 per cent complete at this time. Some winter wheat fields have been flooded and will need to be reseeded, providing field conditions permit. Early seeded crops have already emerged or are beginning to emerge. Table 1 below presents estimates of crop seeding progress in the province, by region.

Precipitation received in most areas of the province during the last two weeks is less than 20 mm. Warm, windy conditions, coupled with the lack of rainfall, have depleted much of the surface soil moisture in many areas, particularly in the North East Region. Provincially, surface soil moisture is rated as one per cent poor, 22 per cent fair, 50 per cent good, 24 per cent excellent, and three per cent excessive. The rating of sub-surface moisture is one per cent poor, 23 per cent fair, 45 per cent good, 30 per cent excellent, and one per cent excessive. Still a concern is the excessive moisture in some low lying fields, mostly in the Southern Region.

The cool temperatures in spring have caused significant delay in tame hay and pasture growth, although conditions have improved markedly during the last two weeks. Provincially, pasture is rated as three per cent poor, 20 per cent fair, 63 per cent good, and 14 per cent excellent, while tame hay is reported as three per cent poor, 18 per cent fair, 61 per cent good, and 18 per cent excellent.

Due to the recent strong winds, herbicide applications for weed control have been delayed. Also, in most areas of the province, soil erosion from spring run-off and wind ranges from light to moderate.

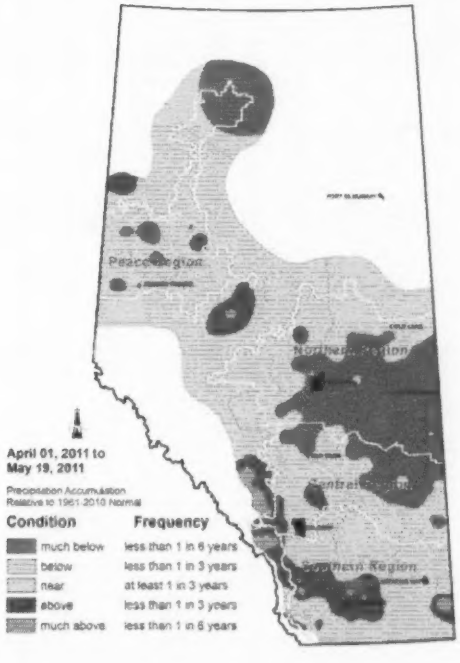

Table 1: Alberta Crop Seeding Progress, as of May 19, 2011

	South	Central	N. East	N. West	Peace	Alberta
Spring Wheat	73%	68%	52%	62%	59%	**64%**
Durum Wheat	73%	73%	65%	62%	59%	**73%**
Oats	43%	34%	16%	32%	33%	**29%**
Barley	62%	47%	18%	30%	38%	**44%**
Canola	74%	74%	57%	58%	59%	**63%**
Dry Peas	83%	84%	75%	62%	71%	**78%**
All Crops	**69%**	**61%**	**44%**	**48%**	**54%**	**57%**
May 20, 2010	*52%*	*61%*	*67%*	*71%*	*92%*	*66%*

Source: Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development, and AFSC

Table 2: Surface Soil Moisture Conditions, as of May 19, 2011

	South	Central	N. East	N. West	Peace	Alberta
Poor	0%	0%	7%	0%	0%	**1%**
Fair	10%	10%	41%	45%	7%	**22%**
Good	61%	48%	47%	41%	54%	**50%**
Excellent	25%	41%	4%	11%	35%	**24%**
Excessive	4%	1%	1%	3%	4%	**3%**
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Source: Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development, and AFSC

Our thanks to Alberta Agricultural Fieldmen, staff of AFSC and the Alberta Ag-Info Centre for their partnership and contribution to the Alberta Crop Reporting Program.

The precipitation map is compiled by Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development, Environmental Stewardship Division, Technology and Innovation Branch

REGIONAL ASSESSMENTS:

The 2011 Alberta Crop Report Series continues to provide summaries for the following five regions:

Region One: Southern (Strathmore, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Foremost)

- Weather conditions during the last two weeks have been mainly warm, dry and windy, despite some precipitation reported in many areas. Overall, seeding has been progressing rapidly, and is estimated at 69 per cent complete. Some winter wheat fields have been flooded and will need to be reseeded, providing field conditions permit. Early seeded crops have already emerged or are beginning to emerge.
- For specialty crops, seeding is estimated at 95 per cent complete for sugar beets, 90 per cent for corn, 85 per cent for potatoes, 82 per cent for lentils, and 18 per cent for dry beans.
- Overall, surface soil moisture is rated as 10 per cent fair, 61 per cent good, 25 per cent excellent, and four per cent excessive. Some low lying fields may not be seeded, due to excessive moisture.
- Pasture and tame hay are mostly in good condition, although growth has been slower than in most years, mainly as a result of cool temperatures in spring.

Region Two: Central (Rimbey, Airdrie, Coronation, Oyen)

- The recent warm, dry weather conditions have allowed seeding to progress rapidly. Overall, about 61 per cent of the crop has been seeded. Early seeded crops are beginning to emerge. Herbicide applications have been delayed, due to windy conditions.
- Overall, surface soil moisture is rated as 10 per cent fair, 48 per cent good, 41 per cent excellent, and one per cent excessive.
- The cool temperatures in spring have caused significant delay in tame hay and pasture growth, although conditions have improved recently.

Region Three: North East (Smoky Lake, Vermilion, Camrose, Provost)

- Precipitation received in the region during the last two weeks ranges from trace to less than 15 mm. The recent warm, windy conditions, coupled with the lack of rainfall have depleted much of the surface soil moisture. Overall, surface soil moisture is rated as seven per cent poor, 41 per cent fair, 47 per cent good, four per cent excellent, and one per cent excessive.
- Seeding in the region is estimated at 44 per cent complete. In some areas, crop germination has been slow and uneven, due to the lack of moisture and cool soil temperatures. The recent windy conditions have caused some delays in herbicide application.
- Pasture growth is reported as three per cent poor, 29 per cent fair, 62 per cent good, and six per cent excellent. A similar rating is reported for tame hay.

Region Four: North West (Barrhead, Edmonton, Leduc, Drayton Valley, Athabasca)

- The recent warm, dry conditions have allowed seeding to progress rapidly. Overall, seeding is estimated at 48 per cent complete. Early seeded crops are beginning to emerge. In some areas, crop germination has been slow, due to the lack of moisture and cool soil temperatures.
- Strong winds have depleted much of the surface soil moisture in many areas. Overall, surface soil moisture is rated as 45 per cent fair, 41 per cent good, 11 per cent excellent, and three per cent excessive.
- Pasture growth is reported as 16 per cent fair, 69 per cent good, and 15 per cent excellent, with a similar rating reported for tame hay.

Region Five: Peace River (Fairview, Falher, Grande Prairie, Valleyview)

- Seeding has been progressing rapidly in most areas of the region. Overall, seeding is estimated at 54 per cent complete. Early seeded crops are beginning to emerge.
- Precipitation received during the last two weeks varies across the region, with larger amounts (15-40 mm) reported in the southeastern parts. Overall, surface soil moisture is rated as seven per cent fair, 54 per cent good, 35 per cent excellent, and four per cent excessive.
- Due to cool temperatures in spring, pasture and tame hay growth has been slow. Overall, pasture and tame hay are reported as 11 per cent poor, 31 per cent fair, 55 per cent good, and three per cent excellent.

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The 2011 Alberta crop reporting series is available on the Internet at: *http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/sdd4191*